

Christ Church Elbow Park Archives

**Interview with Patricia (Pat) Robert**

**Christ Church Elbow Park Oral History Project 2020**

Interviewer: Jeanette King

8 December 2020

10 AM

Zoom Interview

## Transcript of Patricia (Pat) Robert

Interviewed on 8 Dec. 2020

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Interviewed by Jeanette King

Jeanette King, Interviewer

Pat Robert, Narrator

**Jeanette King:** My name is Jeanette King. This is an interview with Pat Robert on December 8th, 2020 at 10:00 AM. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, this interview is being conducted over Zoom. Welcome, Pat and thank you for participating in the Christ Church oral history project.

This interview is being recorded for the Christ Church archives and will be made available to researchers. You will be given a transcript of the recording and will have the opportunity to review it and reconsider any portions of the interview at that time. Is that all right with you?

**Pat Robert:** Yes. That's fine.

**Jeanette:** Okay. Pat, when did you start to attend Christ Church?

**Pat:** I was born in Watrous, Saskatchewan. My father was an Anglican minister and was offered Christ Church in Saskatoon. That's where I grew up. I graduated and worked at University Hospital in Saskatoon as nurse. My maiden name was Bowles.

The first time I was actually at Christ Church was when I was looking for an Anglican minister to officiate at my daughter's wedding. She was living in Yellowknife and asked me to arrange her wedding.

Anyway, I was looking for a church that hopefully was similar to my Dad's. I hadn't lived in Calgary long, and wasn't attending a church, so began to research Anglican churches. When I was looking at the names of the priests, I recognized the name of David Tatchell; he had worked under my dad in Saskatoon. I arranged an interview with him and he was the first minister that I met. He officiated at my daughter's wedding in 1980. That's when I first started going to Christ Church.

I was not regular in my attendance, and then in October 2001 William Pike called me and asked if he could visit me. He did and he invited me to join the Altar Guild.

**Jeanette:** What particular parish activities have you been involved in since you joined Christ Church?

**Pat:** I started doing the food bank in 2003 and I still do. In church, as you come in the door at the back of the church, we have baskets and people put donations of food in them. Of course, this was before Covid. The food bank provides a list of suggested items. The food is blessed at the altar and I take that food to the food bank.

I was a reader from 2001 to 2011; there are two lessons and I used to do one of those. I helped with our ACW rummage sales from 2003 to 2011. We advertised for donations, sorted them, advertised the sale, and sold the items — usually Friday night and Saturday morning.

I was a counter from 2007 to 2017; the Sunday offerings of money were blessed and then I was one of the three who counted them. The money was sealed in a bank deposit bag and I deposited it in the bank.

I was a sidesperson from 2002 to 2008. There are usually two to four sidespeople to escort people to pews. During communion, the sidespeople also stand at the side of the pew at the aisle to regulate the flow of people who are going up to the communion rail.

From 2001 to 2006, I and Barbara Moroney (who passed away some years ago) would make sandwiches for Inn From The Cold.

Also, I was responsible for funeral reception arrangements.

I am also a member of Altar Guild. I am the Convener of Group 4.

**Jeanette:** When did you become involved with Altar Guild?

**Pat:** In 2001.

**Jeanette:** That's such a contribution to Christ Church. Perhaps you could explain the function of the Altar Guild?

**Pat:** As far as I'm concerned, the function of the Altar Guild is firstly to prepare the church for services on Sunday and also for weddings and celebrations of life.

**Jeanette:** I remember when I was on Altar Guild we changed the hangings.

**Pat:** Yes. It's funny that when you have done things for a long time that you forget about all the things you do. Yes, the altar frontals and side curtains reflect the colours of the seasons of the church's liturgical year. When did you become a member?

**Jeanette:** I guess I became a member of Altar Guild around 1990. Perhaps you can think of other functions of Altar Guild: the shining of the various things that are used?

**Pat:** Oh yes, polishing the chalices was one of our duties, as was setting up the altar for services, and washing the chalices after the service. Members of the Altar Guild were responsible for looking after credence cloths. If they needed to be washed, they were taken home, cleaned, rolled and brought back to the church.

**Jeanette:** Perhaps you remember how the duties are divided between members of Altar Guild?

**Pat:** There are four groups for Altar Guild, each responsible for a Sunday. I am the convener for Group 4. Duties occurred on Friday, Sunday, and if it was evensong (a 4:30 PM service on the fourth Sunday of every month) then Monday.

Flowers are put on the altar by parishioners in memory of a loved one who has passed away. The flowers stay on the altar for all services. Because I was a counter, if there were flowers from evensong, then I would wrap the flowers. Someone on the pastoral care committee would pick them up and deliver them to whoever in the parish was in hospital or ill or having a birthday.

**Jeanette:** Which one of the duties that you had with Altar Guild gave you the most satisfaction?

**Pat:** I really liked doing everything.

**Jeanette:** What might be some of the unusual happenings during your time in the Altar Guild?

**Pat:** I don't recall anything.

**Jeanette:** I think if I remember correctly after some of the weddings, we used to just clean the church.

**Pat:** Cleaning the church was the job of the vergers. Our job was to make sure everything at the altar was correct. We would change the hangings, remove pew bows and set up for Sunday if required.

**Jeanette:** Baptisms to a certain extent.

**Pat:** Yes, we were responsible for setting out the baptismal candles, towels and filling the brass ewer with warm water.

**Jeanette:** How has Altar Guild changed over the years?

**Pat:** The duties are always the same, so it really hasn't changed. A different minister may want specific things to be different for a special service.

**Jeanette:** How do you see the Altar Guild evolving in the future?

**Pat:** I am not sure about that, as most of our members have been involved for a long time. As people age they stop being involved. I think younger people choose church activities that involve their children. This is understandable. All our kids were grown, so we had lots of time to do these things. I'm not sure how it will evolve.

**Jeanette:** How have your parish activities affected you? You've done so many of them.

**Pat:** I've always loved what I do. I feel the church is part of me.

**Jeanette:** The Altar Guild creates and cares for a spiritual space for the parish. How has your membership impacted your own spirituality?

**Pat:** I have been a spiritual person my whole life.

**Jeanette:** Is there anything else that you would like to add to our little interview?

**Pat:** No. I just hope that Christ Church is able to carry on. Not going to church is traumatic, because it's been such a big part of my life. Now all services are recorded online and the number of people watching changes quite a bit week-to-week. They do a really good job. It may be difficult to keep up the interest in watching online, I'm not sure.

**Jeanette:** Thank you so much Pat for our conversation.

**Pat:** Thank you.